

# Hillandale

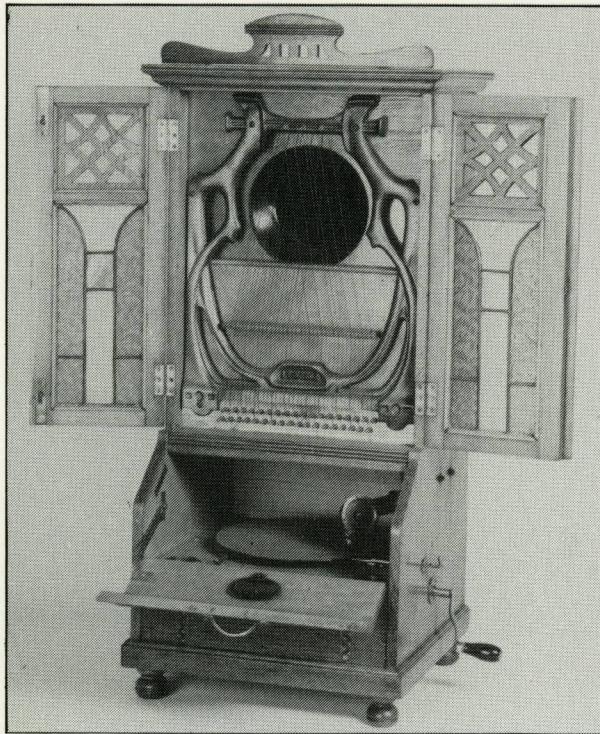
## News

No 195 December 1993



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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

**Patrons:** Oliver Berliner and Kathleen Darby



**President:** George Frow

**Chairman:** Dr Peter Martland

**Editor:** Chris Hamilton, [REDACTED] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

**Secretary:** Suzanne Lewis, [REDACTED] Chesham, Bucks HP5 3JB

**Treasurer:** Chris Hamilton, [REDACTED] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

Tel: [REDACTED]

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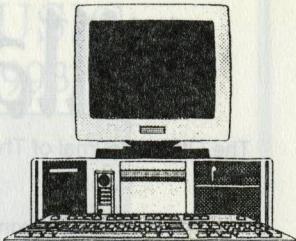
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**Front cover illustration:** Francis Chagrin, one of the founders of the CPNM (see Peter Adamson's article beginning on page 355)

known as the 'Dame of the Gramophone'. The CPNM committee, now bad to decide whether composers should be paid in the U.S. or not. After some time debating on the definition of 'British nationality', it was decided that the CPNM should be open to British nationality.

## EDITOR'S DESK



### Honours

I have just heard that our President George Frow has been elected an honorary member of the Michigan Antique Phonograph Society. He has joined a select band of people (totalling only 5 individuals, including our Patron Oliver Berliner) who have made major contributions to the talking machine world. This is a well-deserved honour and I would like to offer the Society's congratulations and best wishes to George on this recognition of his work.

### December London Meeting

George Woolford, the Chairman of the London meetings, has asked me to remind readers that the meeting on 16th December 1993 is a members evening. He will provide sherry and mince pies **but only** to those who bring an interesting disc or an interesting artefact with which to entertain the audience. He hopes that this will be enough of an incentive to encourage lots of members to come along! We can also play audio-cassettes or reel-to-reel tapes. George looks forward to sharing the festive spirit with members and visitors.

### SPNM

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Society (née Committee) for the Promotion of New Music. The recording activities of this organisation took place in the latter days of the 78 and as their records are rather uncommon and their activities have remained hidden from public view I have taken the opportunity to devote most of this issue to Peter Adamson's article in which he unravels the mysteries concerning the activities of this little-known organisation.

### Seasons Greetings

May I take this opportunity to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. I would also thank them for their support during the year and look forward to their continued support next year.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **February** issue will be **15th December 1993**.

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# THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROMOTION OF NEW MUSIC

## A 50th birthday look at an early recording venture by Peter Adamson

"It all originated in a chance remark made by one composer to another. 'What's the use... of going on writing music if most of us hardly ever get an opportunity to hear what we've written. How can we develop and improve if we're not performed?'" So begins Mosco Carner's article in the October 1945 *Musical Times*<sup>1</sup> on the founding and the aims of the Committee for the Promotion of New Music. In 1993, the now-renamed Society for the Promotion of New Music celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, with special concerts and BBC programmes of music. In 1943, one of the immediate aims of the CPNM was to promote and publicise a List of Recommended Works, and as Carner wrote, the Decca record company showed early interest in the enterprise by offering to record all the works contained on the list. How far this enthusiasm was maintained, and what were the results of this venture, are the subject of this article. I shall give some account of the founding and varying fortunes of the early CPNM (with special reference to recordings), followed by details of the 78rpm recordings published (as some of the disc labels proclaim) "under the auspices of the Committee for the Promotion of New Music." Lastly there is an alphabetic section of rather condensed biographies, again relating almost entirely to the published recordings.

### "The Commotion"

One war-time day in a BBC lift, the composer Francis Chagrin (1905-1972) was authoritatively informed that "people aren't writing music any more."<sup>2</sup> This was one of the things which finally prompted him to do something about having new works performed and publicised: and it was during a meeting of the Arrangers', Composers' and Copyists' Section (ACCS) of the Musicians' Union (MU) on 2 January 1943 that he suggested forming a committee which would work to encourage performances of new music, especially by young composers. He was duly elected to organise this, together with composers Mátyás Seiber (1905-1960) and Roy Douglas (b 1907); most of the other ACCS members were mainly concerned with what was then known as the 'dance-band world'.<sup>3</sup>

And so, on 22 January 1943 there was held the first meeting of the ACCS (MU) *Special Committee for the Promotion of New Music*

(to give its full original name). Besides the three originators, there were also present William Alwyn, Benjamin Britten, Howard Ferguson (b 1908), Sidney Harrison, Gordon Jacob, Muir Mathieson and Michael Tippett (b 1905). Chagrin (now dubbed "Secretary-Organiser") read out a letter from Vaughan Williams, accepting the position of Honorary President and giving the following ringing words of advice: "Avoid all cliques" and "Give a welcome to all good work in whatever style or school."<sup>4</sup> The next meeting (15 February) was chaired by Arthur Bliss, and soon additions to the Committee included composers Edric Cundell, Lennox Berkeley, Ben Frankel and Alan Bush (b 1900), and conductors Mosco Carner, Walter Goehr, Clarence Raybould and Arnold Goldsbrough: there was a practical side to this accumulation of talent, as we shall see. The Committee now had to spend some time deciding on the definition of the "new" music to be considered, and whether composers should perhaps be restricted to British nationality.<sup>5</sup>

A later announcement in *The Musical Times* neatly summed up the aims of the CPNM: "to get in touch with composers who at present lack recognition, and have their works performed before private audiences; to bring the best of these works before the notice of concert societies; to introduce new music into teaching institutions; to promote the creation of libraries of records and scores in suitable places."<sup>16</sup>

However, Carner<sup>7</sup> warned not to expect masterpieces to be discovered, but to allow a new composer to learn from performance of his or her work. Vaughan Williams dubbed it the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to New Music,' and sometimes found his responsibility irksome, but he gave the scheme wholehearted support,<sup>8</sup> even donating £100 from his own pocket!<sup>9</sup> Arthur Jacobs, who was music critic of the *Daily Express* in 1947 and attended meetings at that time, remembers the CPNM being known more succinctly as 'The Committee'.<sup>10</sup>

### Studio Recitals and the List of Recommended Works

It was agreed to accept composers' works for consideration by a number of reading panels: here arose the requirement for several experienced composers and conductors, prepared to put in hours of work. The panels consisted of groups of three, such as (Ferguson, Frankel, Seiber), (Alwyn, Berkeley, Douglas) and (Britten, Cundell, Goldsborough).<sup>11</sup> Suitable works were chosen for public performance by competent artists, to be followed by discussion led by CPNM members; in this way, the budding composers could both hear their music and receive useful criticism of it. A printed questionnaire asked about each work whether it should be brought to a wider audience, and if not, whether there was found evidence of talent or promise.

Properly rehearsed performances of the more modest works took place at what were termed Studio Recitals (SRs), but any large-scale work requiring orchestral forces and a bigger hall was restricted to an

Experimental Rehearsal - a rehearsal followed by another performance. There was the immediate problem of hiring suitable halls for the fortnightly SRs (reduced to monthly in May 1947):<sup>12</sup> Arthur Bliss persuaded the principal of the London School of Cello Playing to loan his studio at 34 Nottingham Place for the first SR - without a fee.<sup>13</sup> Amongst a number of possibilities next considered, Levy's Sound Studios were prepared to lend a studio, but without seating!<sup>14</sup> In the event, May Mukle's M.M. Club at 14 Argyll Street, conveniently (?) "next to Oxford Circus tube station," was chosen to be used for a while. This was followed by a period at the Trinity College of Music in Mandeville Place, and by 1945 SRs were being held at the Fyvie Hall (within The Polytechnic, Upper Regent Street, now part of the renamed University of Westminster).<sup>15</sup>

There was a similar difficulty in obtaining the (free!) services of artists prepared to play the new works: but there were many works, both great and small, played at early SRs by performers of the calibre of Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten, Sophie Wyss and Max Rostal.<sup>16</sup> The main difficulty seems to have been to obtain the frequently required services of good string quartets.<sup>17</sup>

Following a performance at a Studio Recital, each work was considered for inclusion on the List of Recommended Works (also known as Recommended List or RL): this was an essential part of the Committee's work in publicising new music of real worth and was occasionally printed for distribution. Sometimes the recommendation came from the Executive Committee, and sometimes from general approval at a Full Committee meeting.

By 14 January 1944, the RL, comprising works chosen at meetings from the first nineteen SRs, consisted of six works: Ben Frankel's *Sonata* (?1942) for violin solo; Robin Orr's *Sonatina* (1940) for violin and piano; *Divertimento* for flute solo (1939) by William Alwyn; three recent songs for baritone and piano by William Busch; Mátyás Seiber's *Phantasy* for cello and piano

# COMMITTEE FOR THE PROMOTION OF NEW MUSIC

Under the auspices of the Arrangers' Composers' and Copyists' Section  
(MUSICIANS' UNION)

Hon. President	-	-	Dr. R. Vaughan Williams
Hon. Vice-Presidents	-	-	Arthur Bliss, Edric Cundell, Constant Lambert, Dr. John Ireland, Dr. William Walton.
Hon. Organiser	-	-	Francis Chagrin
Secretary	-	-	Lawrence Leonard

The Committee has pleasure in announcing its

## 100th STUDIO RECITAL

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**Dr. R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

at

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THE RECITAL WILL CONSIST OF WORKS FROM THE  
COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED LIST, AND WILL BE  
FOLLOWED BY OPEN DISCUSSION ON THE COMMITTEE'S  
ACTIVITIES.

**ROBIN ORR**

Sonatina for Violin & Piano

Andante moderato  
Adagio appassionato  
Allegro vivace

MAX ROSTAL (Violin)

ROBIN ORR (Piano)

**WILLIAM BUSCH**

3 Songs for Baritone

"The Centaurs"  
"Memory, Hither Come"  
"Laughing Song"

HENRY CUMMINGS (Baritone)

AUGUSTUS LOWE (Piano)

**R. W. WOOD**

3 Studies for Piano

JOYCE RIDDLE (Piano)

**FRANZ REIZENSTEIN**

Prologue, Variations &  
Finale for Violin & Piano

MAX ROSTAL (Violin)

FRANZ REIZENSTEIN (Piano)

The Committee will be glad to hear from any composer wishing to submit a work.

THE 101st STUDIO RECITAL WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, 2nd NOVEMBER 1948.

at The Salle Erard,  
above Augener, Ltd.,  
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at 6.30 p.m.

N.B. ADMISSION BY PROGRAMME ONLY.

### COMMITTEE

William Alwyn	Alan Frank	Alan Rawsthorne
Barbara Banner	Benjamin Franklin	Clarence Reynolds
Arthur Benjamin	Ricardo Gerhard	Max Rostal
Lennox Berkeley	Walter Goehr	Edmund Rubbra
Benjamin Britten	Arnold Goldfarb	Lionel Salter
Alan Bush	Stephen Johnson	John Tavener
Dr. Marcus Carter	Leonard Isaac	Thomas Russell
Francis Chagrin	Dr. Gordon Jacob	Matyas Seiber
Dr. Hubert Clifford	Maur Mathiessen	Bernard Stevens
Ray Douglas	Dr. Sidney Northgate	Michael Tippett
Howard Ferguson		Seymour Whynot

All communications to the Secretary:—Committee for the Promotion of New Music, 5, Egmont House, 116, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1; Telephone: GERrard 8993

(1941); and *Toulon* for mixed voices and piano (1942), again by Frankel.<sup>18</sup> By 21 April, Franz Reizenstein's *Prologue, variations and finale* (1937) had been added.<sup>19</sup>

Accompanying this article (p362) is shown a later printed RL for May 1950, which gives some idea of the later overall scope of music publicised in this way: many of these composers are still remembered, but some are now forgotten.

### Decca recordings

At the CPNM meeting of 26 November 1943, Chagrin reported having had correspondence and interviews with a representative of the Decca record company, as a result of which "the Company proposed to issue under a special label a series of recordings of works recommended by the Committee. They planned at the moment to bring out twelve double-sided records per annum..."<sup>20</sup> By January 1944,<sup>21</sup> Decca were about to commence recording, and on 21 April,<sup>22</sup> Chagrin reported that two works from the Recommended list had already been recorded, Alwyn's *Divertimento* and Seiber's *Phantasy*, and that further recordings were being arranged. However the Committee now requested Decca to issue the records under their usual label. Decca soon wrote back to say that the first five works on the list of recommended works would be recorded by 20 July and the first recording (the Seiber *Phantasy*) issued with their July supplement.<sup>23</sup> Although the Seiber work was issued as promised (but requiring only a 10" disc) and the Orr *Sonatina* and Frankel *Sonata* were recorded on 18 July, the issued second takes of the Busch songs were not recorded until 26 July. No record of Alwyn's *Divertimento* for flute solo has been traced, and it has not been possible to confirm when (or indeed if) it was recorded.<sup>24</sup>

At this point, the CPNM minutes become very coy about the Decca recordings: it may be concluded that, on the whole, this area of CPNM affairs was being organised almost entirely by Chagrin, with little reference to either the Executive or Full Commit-

tees. There is no mention of the recording or issue of either Frankel's *Toulon* or Reizenstein's *Prologue, variations and finale*. In fact, information about the progress of the recordings has to be gleaned from Decca monthly supplements and magazine reviews (see the later main section on the issued recordings). However, the following parallel episode is worth recounting, as it indicates the eventual demise of the scheme.

### The affair of the disappearing leaflets

At the CPNM Executive Committee meeting of 22 November 1944, Chagrin announced (again!) that Decca had decided to record one work a month, and it was now agreed that leaflets dealing with the works in question should be issued. By December, Decca had expressed themselves pleased with the sale of the record of Seiber's *Phantasy*, and Chagrin had suggested to the company that the Committee should share the expense of printing leaflets. It was decided to print 1000 for each of the recommended works, to be sent to the composers and performers for distribution to the public. Short biographies and analyses of the works would be requested from the composers. Decca would be asked for more publicity for the records.<sup>25</sup>

In March 1945, Decca had informed the Committee that a charge to the public would have to be made for the leaflets; the inclusion of musical examples was felt to be too expensive.<sup>26</sup> Chagrin felt that the Committee should pay for printing, but that Decca should contribute: he had told Decca that the Committee was trying to encourage the sale of Decca's records - the leaflets should be widely propagated via performers and concert-giving organisations.<sup>27</sup> Decca agreed to contribute not more than £25 towards printing expenses, and the Committee agreed to obtain printers' estimates.<sup>28</sup> Mosco Carner agreed to read the proofs and by October 1945 it was decided to proceed.<sup>29</sup> "Recordings, together with explanatory leaflets, of the first nine works

and a bigger one was restricted to an Seiber's *Phantasy* for cello and piano

chosen should be available to the public before long..." wrote Carner hopefully in his *Musical Times* article.<sup>30</sup>

By the time sample proofs were obtained and slight amendments requested, three more Executive meetings had passed, and it was the end of November; but at least musical examples were now to be included and Roy Douglas was all set for the final proof-reading.<sup>31</sup> The next mention of leaflets is not until the next May, with a request for a date for delivery from the printers,<sup>32</sup> and they were duly reconsidered on 11 June 1946.<sup>33</sup> After some fiddling with the content, typeface and layout, the leaflets were approved for (another) final proof-reading by Julian Clifford, and Decca were asked for their £25 donation<sup>34</sup> which was received in October.<sup>35</sup> There was another delay before it was suggested that Decca should now be asked to distribute the leaflets;<sup>36</sup> this was minuted on 17 March 1947 as taking place: but, the Executive meeting minute on this was *deleted* at the following Executive meeting (21 May), by which time it had been reported to a full CPNM meeting (25 April 1947) that *Decca were not prepared to go on with the scheme*. That meant the end of the leaflets (after nearly two-and-a-half years in preparation) and also the end of the collaboration between Decca and the CPNM. Although no reason was given in the contemporary minutes, a hint appears in a much later Executive Committee report (covering June 1953 to May 1954) which states that Decca "had declined on financial grounds to continue," and Roy Douglas has always understood that the company withdrew simply because the records which they *had* issued didn't sell enough copies.<sup>37</sup>

### Fund raising and publicity

Details of the financial affairs of the CPNM are beyond the scope of this article. But is worth mentioning that the CPNM received a regular annual grant (originally £300 p.a.) from CEMA (the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, later to become the Arts Council of Great Britain) and had only a very small income from subscriptions

and donations. Outgoings were mainly printing and telephone costs, together with secretarial and hall expenses,<sup>38</sup> as most musical services were given free. But by mid-1948, there were difficulties; appeals were made to notable wealthy figures who were potential patrons (including the Maharajah of Mysore), to the Arts Council for extra money, and to Decca. The most significant response was an award of \$1000 from the Koussevitzky Foundation.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, problems were due partly to lack of publicity; the collapse of the recording project (as a means of disseminating new works) was an extra blow. Attempts were made to get the BBC to broadcast CPNM performances, with stress laid on the eminence of many members of the Committee.<sup>40</sup>

The CPNM tackled Decca again (seemingly from a position of ignorance): "The secretary was instructed to find out from composers on our Recommended List which works were recorded by Decca."<sup>41</sup> The only works reported to be "available at present" were the Busch songs, Frankel Sonata and Orr Sonatina; it was understood that the Reizenstein work would be re-issued. [The March 1949 Decca catalogue omits the Seiber record, as being pre-"*ftr*", but it does include Frankel's *Toulon* along with the other works: the Reizenstein records had in fact never yet been issued.] Decca regretted that it was impossible at present to record more new works. This led the CPNM to make an unsuccessful attempt to contact HMV in the hope of making an alternative arrangement.<sup>42</sup> Then the Committee tried a different tack: when the secretary presented "a letter from Decca on the subject of recordings" (presumably about their non-appearance in the catalogue), he was asked to write to Decca that "the artists had all given their services for these recordings without charge, and... the Committee felt it was unfair not to publish the records."<sup>43</sup> But it should be noted that at least one of the Decca recording contracts did give the performers royalties,<sup>44</sup> and anyway the Reizenstein duly appeared in a special supplement for mid-July 1949.

## The British Council connection

The British Council had been formed in November 1934, in order to spread information abroad about British culture. Early on, this activity included the sending out of records of British music, and eventually there was a Music Advisory Committee; however, unlike the CPNM, the Council did not aim to sponsor new musical work, but to promote established British composers abroad.<sup>45</sup>

When the CPNM made an appeal to the British Council in August 1948, the Council could only offer some hope of the possibility of help with recording RL works.<sup>46</sup> They then agreed to circulate the RL, when copies were obtainable, and to buy thirty copies of all RL works for their libraries; it was suggested that artists going abroad under BC auspices might be asked to include some RL works in their repertoires.<sup>47</sup>

Just after the war, the British Council's Music Advisory Committee included Eric Blom, Adrian Boult, Professor E Dent, and the ubiquitous Alan Bush, with Arthur Bliss as chairman. At the meeting of 13 July 1948, Dr Bliss was absent, but he had made it clear that he was "most anxious for the *Nocturne*... by Phyllis Tate to be recorded... Dr Bliss also wished the Priaulx Rainier String Quartet to be added to the list of future recordings." On 8 March 1949, the assistant secretary reported that the *Nocturne* had recently been recorded.<sup>48</sup> He hoped it would be possible "to make one more recording in this Financial Year, and that this would probably be the Priaulx Rainier String Quartet, performed by the Amadeus Quartet with the Decca Company."<sup>49</sup> Decca were evidently quick off the mark, for the discs were recorded on 14 March! By July 1949, the Rainier Quartet recording was reported to go "on the market shortly," and by April 1950 the records were selling well.<sup>50</sup>

The CPNM were obviously still keen to have more of their Recommended Works recorded, because one year later they again

approached the British Council with the request that they might consider sponsoring works on their Recommended List. The matter was discussed by the BC Music Advisory Committee (chaired on this occasion by Adrian Boult) and it was finally agreed that "the works on this List represented - for the most part - the earlier works of the composers and the British Council should await the further development of a composer before recording his works."<sup>51</sup> Another approach was made to the BBC regarding the broadcast of SRs, but the BBC were unable to assist.<sup>52</sup>

## CPNM to SPNM (and disc to tape)

It had already been proposed to form the CPNM into a Society.<sup>53</sup> By October 1951, a draft amended Constitution had been prepared, leading to the inaugural meeting of the Society for the Promotion of New Music on 27 May 1952.

In June 1952, it was reported that attempts were still being made to get Recommended works recorded. The Regency Recording Company had now offered to make recordings, and the matter was to be pursued with other companies, including Argo, Nixa and Allegro.<sup>54</sup> It was now also known that Sir Adrian Boult had acquired a tape recorder.<sup>55</sup> The BBC were once again approached with a view to recording a recital for broadcast; this was attempted and abandoned as unsatisfactory.<sup>56</sup>

Second performances of works had already sometimes been required for their reassessment for the RL. The idea of recording SRs to avoid this, or for those members wishing to hear works again, had long been felt desirable. After approach had been made to a number of people and organisations, Sir Adrian Boult very generously presented the SPNM with "a recording machine." All SRs from January 1953 were recorded, by arrangement with the artists and unions [tapes were erased after playback to members].<sup>57</sup>

In June 1953, it was agreed that "a fresh attempt should be made to get Recommended List works recorded," and re-

questioned the Executive Committee to consider various possibilities, including the formation of a membership Society (guaranteeing to take records): inviting Decca to reissue those records made by them some years ago: and taking those works already recorded and getting them processed and distributed.<sup>58</sup> However, the following year, it was reported that "Decca, which had years ago recorded some of these works, had declined on financial grounds to continue, and no other sponsor could be found. Enquiries were made with various companies, and possible sale of records by the Society was considered, but the idea was not practicable and was abandoned..."<sup>59</sup>

And so ends this tale of a rather obscure corner of British recording history. It is also, rather surprisingly, a little-known area of British *musical* history: many of the famous contemporary names in British music appeared amidst even the very earliest activity of the CPNM; yet almost no biographies refer to this organisation, which (as the SPNM) has now successfully reached its fiftieth birthday.

## Notes

- 1 Carner: *The CPNM* [MT, Oct 1945, pp297-92]
- 2 John Woolf (SPNM administrator 1966-1980), *SPNM50*, p7
- 3 Roy Douglas, letter to the author 31 July 93
- 4 CPNM; early meetings were at Egmont House, 116 Shaftesbury Ave
- 5 CPNM 5 Mar 43
- 6 *MT*, Sep 1944, p282
- 7 Carner, op. cit.
- 8 Ursula Vaughan Williams: *R. V. W.*, OUP, 1964
- 9 Exec 18 Feb 46
- 10 *SPNM50*, p48
- 11 CPNM 27 Sep 43
- 12 CPNM 25 Apr 47
- 13 CPNM 2 Apr 43
- 14 CPNM 16 Apr 43. It may be speculated how differently the CPNM's recording ambitions might have developed if Levy's had had seats in their Sound Studios.
- 15 CPNM SR programmes
- 16 CPNM SR programmes
- 17 CPNM 13 July 44
- 18 CPNM 14 Jan 44
- 19 CPNM
- 20 CPNM
- 21 CPNM 14 Jan 44
- 22 CPNM
- 23 CPNM 19 May 44
- 24 By curious coincidence, two of the issued CPNM records in the Decca catalogue, M576 (Busch songs) and M578 (Frankel *Toulon* etc), flank a recording of Alwyn's arrangement of negro spirituals for viola (Watson Forbes) and piano, on M577.
- 25 Exec 19 Dec 44
- 26 Exec 27 Mar 45
- 27 Exec 24 Apr 45
- 28 Exec 5 June 45
- 29 Exec 11 Sep; 23 Oct 45
- 30 Carner, op. cit.
- 31 Exec 6,20,29 Nov 45
- 32 Exec 13 May 46
- 33 Exec
- 34 Exec 16,30 Sep 46
- 35 CPNM accts
- 36 Exec 17 Feb 47
- 37 Roy Douglas, letter to the author 28 Aug 93
- 38 CPNM accts
- 39 Exec 9 Mar, 6 Apr, 6 May, 29 July 48
- 40 Exec 21 May 47
- 41 Exec 1 Oct 48
- 42 Exec 13,30 Dec 48
- 43 Exec 11 Feb 49
- 44 Margaret Pleeth, letter to the author 21 Oct 93
- 45 Westrup, J. A: *The British Council and Music*: *MT*, Aug 1944, pp236-7
- 46 Exec 12 Aug 48
- 47 Exec 4 Nov, 13 Dec 48
- 48 It was necessary to re-record two sides [BC Music Advisory Committee (72) 12 Apr 50], before issue on Decca AK2400/2.
- 49 BC Music Advisory Committee (69). Unfortunately the BC's own file on the CPNM (GB/140/10, archived 1964) was destroyed in May 1970.
- 50 BC Mus Advisory Committee (70), 12 July 49; (72), 12 April 50
- 51 BC Music Advisory Committee (75), 12 June 51
- 52 Exec 11 Dec 51; 12 Feb 52
- 53 CPNM 14 Jan 49
- 54 SPNM 25 June 52
- 55 Working Committee 23 July 52
- 56 Exec 9 Sep 52 *et seq*
- 57 Exec report April 52 to May 53
- 58 SPNM Annual Council 10 June 53. Unexpectedly, the Decca catalogues contain nearly all the records *continuously* from date of issue; the June 1954 catalogue actually lists the whole set! Whether the discs were really continuously available is another matter: see notes on the Reizenstein recording in the next section.
- 59 Exec report June 53 to May 54

## A later list of Recommended Works (1950)

## The published recordings

In this survey of recordings of works from the CPNM List of Recommended Works (RL), I have listed all those known to have been issued (in order of issue date). As already described, there was at least one untraced unissued recording (Alwyn's *Divertimento*). The records were made at the Decca Studios, 165 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. Matrix take numbers are those taken from published discs examined.

### 1. Decca M565

**Mátyás Seiber** (1905-1960):

*Phantasy for cello and piano*  
dated Lillington (Beds) 17-21 July 1941  
[pub: Schott 1944]

**William Pleeth** (cello)

**Margaret Good** (piano)

rec: 14 Apr 44: DR8357-2, 58-2; iss: July 44

"This is the first recording to be issued under the auspices of 'The Society [sic] for the Promotion of New Music' and it is an

excellent start to this very worthy cause." Thus the reviewer Alec Robertson [Gramophone, Aug 1944, p33] referred to Decca M565; the advertisement [Gramophone, July 1944] and the disc itself correctly refer to the Committee.

It was surely appropriate to start the series with a fine piece by one of the co-founders of the CPNM. AR went on to compare the work with Bartók's, with the spare clear texture being "most expressive and easy to follow." He found the playing "all that the composer could, surely, desire" with both artists plainly attuned to the mood of the beautiful little piece. The *Phantasy* was in fact written for, and dedicated to, William Pleeth and his wife Margaret Good, who played the work at the eighth SR [Trinity College, 5 July 1943]; it was later elected unanimously to the RL [CPNM 16 Aug 1943]. The music and playing are indeed delightful, with a quality of sound (recorded on 14 April 1944) prefiguring usage of the famous Decca "ffrr" technique.



## 2. Decca M576

**William Busch** (1901-1945):

*Song [Memory, hither come]* (William Blake)  
dated Feb-Mar 1943 [pub: Chester 1944]

*The Centaurs* (James Stephens)  
dated Feb 1942 [pub: Chester 1944]

*Rest ("Æ")* [George William Russell]]  
dated Dec 1933 [pub: OUP 1944]

*The Laughing Song* (William Blake)  
dated Feb-Mar 1943 [pub: Chester 1944]

**Henry Cummings** (baritone)

**Ivor Newton** (piano)

rec: 26 July 44: DR8589-2, 90-2; iss: Jan 45

William Busch's song settings are typically well-chosen, tasteful and delicate, robust and elegant. He published two pairs of Blake settings; the other pair are *The Echoing Green* and *The Shepherd*. Although *New Grove* lumps them all together as written in 1943, they were in fact published as separate pairs, with different dedications, and by different publishers (in 1944). The settings of *Memory* (from *Poetical Sketches*, 1783) and *The Laughing Song* (from *Songs of Innocence*, 1794) are described in *The Music Review* [MR vi (1945), p16] as having an arabesque character.

Lewis Foreman's fascinating survey of twentieth-century British musical correspondence [*From Parry to Britten*, Batsford, 1987] includes a request (29 March 1943) from the composer Elizabeth Poston to Julian Herbage (later known, along with Alec Robertson and Anna Instone, in the famous long-running BBC weekly programme *Music Magazine*). In it she recommends consideration of the Busch songs for broadcast in the Home Service: she had already accompanied them herself on the European Service, and explained that they were written for Henry Cummings. (The two Blake songs on the CPNM record are indeed dedicated to Cummings, but the other two Blake songs are in fact dedicated to Poston herself.) Herbage's reply suggested that the music, or a recording, be sent to help with the evaluation. Unfortu-

nately, the BBC now has no record of whether the idea was taken up, and there seems to be no mention in *Radio Times* within the following six months. However, three of the songs (excluding *Rest*) were performed by Cummings (with Leonard Isaacs on piano) at the seventh SR at Trinity College on 21 June 1943, and were immediately put on the RL [Exec 23 Jun 43].

This small selection of Busch's songs was recorded on 26 July 1944, only six months before his death. The resulting disc M576 appeared in January 1945; Decca did not advertise it in *The Gramophone*, but it was reviewed there in February 1945 [p108], and also briefly in *The Music Review* [MR vi (1945), p124] which bemoaned "our sense of loss in the composer's recent and untimely death." Alec Robertson (*Gramophone*) gives a short account of Busch's life, and mentions the recent broadcast of his cello concerto. He praises the immediate appeal of Æ's *Rest* as a completely successful and charming setting of the words [from *The Divine Vision* and other poems, 1904]; he likes the rather sinister atmosphere of *The Centaurs* [from Stephens' last collection *The Kings and the Moon*, 1938], and declares *The Laughing Song* to be entirely delightful. However, *Memory* he compares less favourably with the early setting of the same poem by Busch's teacher Ireland. He praises Henry Cummings' excellent diction and complete understanding, and the fine playing of Ivor Newton: "the balance is the best we have this month." In contrast, the ever-fastidious *Music Review* thought that the balance should have been better!

### 3. Decca K1112

**Robin Orr** (b 1909):

*Sonatina for violin and piano*

Dec 1940 [pub: OUP 1946]

*Andante moderato; Adagio appassionato;*  
*Allegro vivace*

**Max Rostal** (violin)

**Franz Osborn** (piano)

rec: 18 July 44: AR8579-2, 80-2; iss: Feb 45

This record and its first mention in the Decca catalogue both give the title incorrectly as *Sonatine*, as do the Decca supplement and *Gramophone* advertisement of February 1945. Once again, the reviewer [*Gramophone*, March 1945, p119] was Alec Robertson (AR); he pointed out that the CPNM deserved every encouragement, and spent half a column recounting a visit of his own to one of their meetings, where new works were played and discussed. He seems to have been in some doubt as to the record-worthiness of the *Sonatina*, which he labelled a "work-in-progress." In contrast, John Boulton in *Music Review* [MR vi (1945), p127] reviewed the record rather tersely but in words of great encouragement: "Your little work shows great promise. The devastating attack made on it in certain quarters only means that you have no affinities with a certain established *école*. That need not worry you; on the contrary, originality at least is granted you." Later, when the music was published, *Music Review* [MR viii (1947), p67] said: "...it well deserves publication. The composer has succeeded in using many of the clichés of the new academicism, and yet fashioning vital and attractive music out of them." The *Musical Times* [MT, Mar 1945, p86] declared the disc to be the best of the CPNM issues so far.

AR rightly observed that Robin Orr had been splendidly served by Max Rostal and Franz Osborn: "the performance could not, surely, be better." These two fine players had given the very first performance of the work (completed in December 1940) on the BBC Latin American Service in 1941, and

they played the *Sonatina* at the second SR on 16 April 1943 (at the M.M. Club). The piece was one of the first to go onto the RL [Exec 26 May 43] and the first by Orr published. The recording was made on 18 July 1944; Professor Orr reports that it sold very well and that Decca made a second pressing [letter to the author 12 Feb 93].

### 4. Decca M578

**Ben Frankel** (1906-1973):

*Toulon* (Honor Arundel)

n.d. [1942] [pub: WMA 1942]

**Geoffrey Corbett** (b 1907):

*Raiders* (Honor Arundel)

n.d. [pub: WMA n.d.]

**Choir of the Workers' Music Association**, conducted by the composers, with piano  
rec: 27 Jan 45: DR9083-1, 84-2; iss: Apr 45

Both these songs are suitably dramatic settings for SATB voices, of contemporary war poems by the left-wing writer Honor Arundel, and are performed by the Choir of the Workers' Music Association, conducted by the respective composers. The WMA was founded in 1936 by the left-wing composer Alan Bush (b 1900), who became its chairman and later (1941) president. At this time there were a number of parallels and personal connections between the WMA and the CPNM, not least the fact that the WMA had also recently published several recordings made by Decca: these appeared on the Topic label, and were mainly of left-wing songs and Soviet Russian music, together with short works by composers such as Alan Rawsthorne, Elizabeth Maconchy (since 1976 president of the SPNM) and Alan Bush himself.

Because the song settings (published by the WMA) are extremely obscure, it is worth giving some account of them: *Toulon* tells of an heroic war-time sacrifice by the French navy. In late 1942, the Germans overran Vichy France (the southern half of the country, which had not been occupied in 1940) and entered the port of Toulon on 27

November 1942: to avoid the disaster of its falling into enemy hands, Admiral de Laborde ordered that the French fleet be scuttled. Some sixty ships, together with munition dumps etc in the naval arsenal, were dynamited by the French - the battle cruisers *Dunkerque* and *Strasbourg* were among the ships that went down. [Peter Young: *World War 1939-45*, Arthur Baker, 1966; *Daily Telegraph Story of the War*, vol 2, Hodder & Stoughton, 1943]

Arundel's poem is in a typical compact ballad style of five verses, praising the courage of the French sailors in carrying out this honourable deed in the face of the advancing enemy: "Your sons will remember your deed with pride, / When they live in the France for which you died, / Where free men have their say!" Alan Bush conducted the WMA Choir in a performance of *Toulon* for the CPNM [seventeenth SR, Trinity College, 6 December 1943], along with his own setting (1942, unpub) of a similar poem by his wife Nancy Head, also entitled *Toulon*, for mezzo-soprano and mixed choir.

The verses of *Raiders* seem not to be about any particular war-time feat, but again have the same bright grimness, which is reflected in the angular music. In this case, the effect is somehow more overtly political, with its refrain: "Look out, brothers, look out!" The setting, by the WMA committee chairman Geoffrey Corbett, was dedicated to the Kodak Choir (the choir of the film company!), which he conducted [John Miller (WMA), letter to the author 19 Sep 93]. It was not performed at a CPNM SR, and so it was never on the RL, but was no doubt included on this disc as an obviously suitable companion to Frankel's *Toulon*.

The recordings (27 January 1945) were advertised on M578 in the supplement for April 1945, and also *The Gramophone* for May 1945 along with an excerpt from Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* film music (M579), Britten and Curzon playing Britten's two-piano works (*Introduction and Rondo alla Burlesca* and *Mazurka Elegiaca*) and other more standard fare. Interestingly, in

this case the advert mistakenly gives the disc as recorded under the auspices of the Society, rather than the Committee for the Promotion of New Music.

The *Gramophone* reviewer (Alec Robertson) in the same issue [p145] felt that neither of the themes called for music, and that the use of the piano was anyway "wildly inappropriate." He also objected that it was "certainly not 'new' music. The conservative element in the SPNM [sic] must have been predominant in this choice." He found the recording quite good and the choir adequate, but was unfortunately unable to make out the words.

Both poems were published in *The Book of Words* [WMA, n.d. (1947)], a collection of songs and poems given at three WMA concerts. Here, *Ballad of Toulon* has a different end to the first verse, and after the second, an extra (anti-fascist) verse. Of the printed music only *Toulon* is dated (1942), but both pieces were advertised by the WMA among 'New British Songs' in a list of 'Music of Our Time' in the left-wing journal *Our Time* [Jan 1944, p17], of which Frankel was an editor. Other items in the list include Corbett's *The Miners* for male voices (words by Arundel), and two song settings by Elizabeth Maconchy.

##### 5. Decca K1178/9

**Ben Frankel** (1906-1973):

*Sonata for violin, op13*

n.d. [pub: (ed Rostal) Augener 1946]

*Molto moderato... Allegro con spirito;*  
*Allegro, quasi andantino*

**Max Rostal** (violin)

rec: 18 July 44: AR8581-2, 82-2, 83-1, 84-2;

iss: Sep 46

"An unaccompanied violin sonata is now a rarity" begins W R Anderson in *The Gramophone* [Nov 1946, p83], "and bold is the composer who attempts one." WRA understandably derived a good deal of pleasure from this work, which has an easy flow of well punctuated ideas. He was occasionally

reminded of Bloch's manner, with a lighter touch. "This is the easiest-going sonata I know... it is not a bit extremist" he enthuses. Rather more drily, *The Music Review* [MR viii (1947), p174] sums up - "the outstanding merit of this work is a strength of creative imagination equal to its technical resource" - and reminds its readers of the availability of this fine recorded performance. The *Sonata* was published (Augener) in 1946 in an edition by Max Rostal.

Decca did not advertise this recording in *The Gramophone*, and the discs (K1178/9, recorded 18 July 1944) did not appear until the September 1946 supplement, where they are shown along with a short description of the *Sonata*. The labels do not mention the CPNM: this may merely reflect the impending break with the CPNM in early 1947 [see main article]. However the *Sonata* was played by Max Rostal at the very first SR [London School of Cello Playing, 2 Apr 1943], at which Tippett led the discussion [John Amis, pers. comm.]; Howard Ferguson recalls that he was so impressed by it that he arranged to have it included in one of the war-time mid-day National Gallery Concerts which he helped to organise [letter to the author 28 July 93]. It was one of the first works to be put onto the RL [Exec 26 May 44], and the May 1950 printed issue of the RL does give the single Decca record number K1178. Therefore I have included it in this series of recorded works from the CPNM Recommended List.

#### 6. Decca AK1187/90

**Franz Reizenstein** (1911-1968):

*Prologue, variations and finale* dated Santiago de Chile, July 1937  
[pub: Hawkes & Son 1939]

*Three pieces op7 no1:*  
3. *Lullaby*, 2. *Marcia barbara*  
1936 [pub: Hawkes & Son 1937]

**Max Rostal** (violin)

**Franz Reizenstein** (piano)

rec: 12 Mar 45: AR9187-2, 88-2, 89-2, 90-2, 91-2, 92-2, 93-2; 30 July 45: AR9600-2 iss: mid-July 49

Donald Mitchell, writing in February 1950 about this recording in *The Music Review* [MR xi (1950), p77], referred to the solid craftsmanship of this work, the real concern for the process of composition. Although this sometimes led Reizenstein to be "less imaginative than he might be, the final impression left is one of deep seriousness... and moments of rare beauty... Reizenstein's teacher Hindemith makes a very brief appearance at the beginning of variation 3." The (EMG) *Monthly Letter* for December 1949, on the other hand, declared that "on the evidence of this work alone... Reizenstein is by no means the 'disciple' of Hindemith that most critics would suggest"! The EMG reviewer had no hesitation is describing this as a distinguished work and the product of an intelligent and perceptive mind; Mitchell thought it was "capitally performed." The recording is notably good and the playing particularly fine. These same performers had been billed to give the work at a CPNM SR at Trinity College on 30 August 1943; but it was replaced by other Frankel works, and was eventually given at another SR, at the Fyvie Hall on 11 April 1944, quickly going onto the RL [CPNM 21 Apr 44].

Reizenstein arranged the *Three Pieces* op 7 no 1 from his *Suite for piano* op 6 of 1936; they are dedicated to the violinist Antonio Brosa. The first piece (not played here) is *Aria* (the second piece in the piano suite), and the second and third (played here in reverse order) are *Marcia barbara* (no 5 for piano) and *Lullaby* (originally no 6). Although the *Lullaby* is gently lilting, there is weight behind the gentleness; to end with, the *Marcia* is very short with rapid pizzicato decorations, and terse rather than barbaric. These short pieces were not reviewed by *Music Review*, nor by *The Gramophone*, which did not review the records at all: the EMG reviewer makes only slight reference to them. This fill-up record side does not mention any sponsorship: at a CPNM full meeting [14 January 1944], the *Suite for piano* was noted "to be considered further," but did not in fact reach the RL.

The set of discs were advertised by Decca in *Gramophone* March 1950 amongst a list of "Collectors' Pieces... [A] further list of recordings which are 'off the beaten track'" (including the Priaulx Rainier Quartet mentioned later). The *Supplementary Catalogue of Decca Records April 1949 to July 1949* includes a section entitled "A special [mid-July] issue of fifty-three classical works" including the Reizenstein records, "Recorded under the auspices of The Society [sic] for the Promotion of New Music" (this mistake is repeated on the discs). Edward Sackville-West in "A Quarterly Retrospect July to September 1949" [*Gramophone*, Nov 1949, p96] refers to these fifty-three works which were supposed to be available within a month: "Yet even now opinions seem to differ as to how many of these issues have actually been released." He goes on to deplore Decca's self-defeating policy of announcing records when they were still unavailable, a situation "complicated by the necessity of pressing great quantities of discs for the USA." This capricious behaviour by Decca may account for the lack of a *Gramophone* review and the fact that the records are not even noted in the RL for May 1950 (see page 362).

At all events, the records, made on 12 March and 30 July 1945, were evidently long delayed before issue on AK1187-90: by this time, Decca had made their abrupt announcement [*Gramophone*, Nov 1948, p100] that all recordings of more than one record would be issued in automatic sequences only. *WERM* erroneously gives manual coupling numbers.

## 7. Decca AK2278/9

### **Priaulx Rainier (1903-1986):**

*String quartet [no 1]*

1939 [pub: Schott 1947]

*Allegro molto serioso; Vivace leggiero  
grazioso; Andante tranquillo;  
Presto spiritoso.*

### Amadeus Quartet:

**Norbert Brainin (violin)**

**Robert Brumley (violin)**  
**Siegmund Nissel (violin)**

Peter Schidlof (viola)

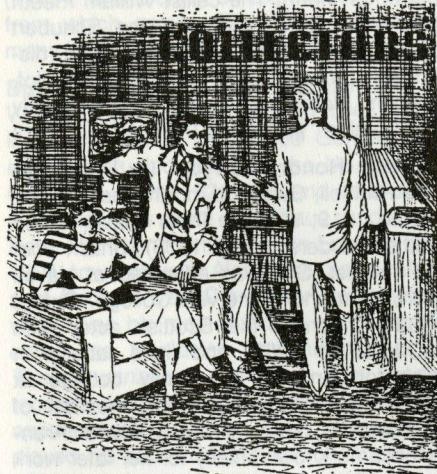
**Martin Lovett (cello)**

rec: 14 Mar 49: AP

ISS: before Dec 49

This piece was recorded [14 March 1949] under the auspices of the British Council, as already described; this fact is noted on the discs. Priaulx Rainier's string quartet of 1939 was for a while known as number 1; no 2 of 1951 was eventually withdrawn [G5; NG]. The *Gramophone* reviewer [AR again, Jan 1950, p144] commented on her remarkable mastery of this difficult medium and on the discernible influence of Bartók. Edward Sackville-West in his "Quarterly Retrospect" [Gramophone, Feb 1950, p156] said that she "shows herself a subtle mistress of polyphony, with a delicate sense of harmonic tension" but did not care much for her "scrubbing-brush Finale"! Both the *Music Review* [MR xi (1950), p75] and the (EMG) *Monthly Letter* [Dec 1949], while praising her skill and individuality, found her brevity of phrases something of a handicap. The two *Gramophone* reviewers declared both performance and recording to be exemplary, with EMG demurring somewhat.

The piece had been played by the Zorian Quartet at a CPNM SR on 30 January 1945 and was put on the RL on 13 July 1945 [CPNM]. During 1949, Olive Zorian's Quartet was disbanded; the Amadeus Quartet had already become famous and an obvious choice for this recording (their first). There remain a couple of unexplained oddities about this recording: Decca apparently have no information about it in their artist or contract files, although it does appear in recording sheets; and the matrix numbers for the first two sides (on two copies examined) are engraved in EMI-style type and are suffixed "HH", whose meaning has yet to be discovered.



## PIECES

This further list of recordings which are 'off the beaten track' has been selected for the music-lover whose record collection, comprehensive and carefully chosen, reflects the character and the discriminating taste of its owner. Recorded with infinite care and artistic skill, these rare works glow with all the splendour of *living music* . . . a splendour that only ffrr can give.

### Malcolm Arnold

Beckus the Dandipratt — Overture  
Eduard van Beinum conducting  
The London Philharmonic Orchestra AK 1844

### Bach-Mainardi

Suite No. 2 in D minor for unaccompanied Violoncello  
Enrico Mainardi ('Cello) AK 2155-7

### Bartók

Concerto for Orchestra  
Eduard van Beinum conducting  
The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam AK 2042-6

### Berlioz

Romeo and Juliet, Op. 17 — Queen Mab Scherzo X 281  
Romeo's Reverie and Fête at the Capulets'; Love Scene AX 293-5  
Charles Münch conducting L'Orchestre de la  
Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris

### Bizet

Patrie — Overture, Op. 19  
Roger Desormière conducting  
The National Symphony Orchestra AK 2105-6

### Fauré

L'horizon chimérique, Op. 118  
Gérard Souzay (Baritone) with piano accompaniment  
by Jean Michel Damase K 1693

### Frankel

Sonata for unaccompanied Violin, Op. 13  
Max Rostal (Violin) AK 1178-9

### Geminiani

Concerto grosso in C minor, Op. 2  
Boyd Neel conducting The Boyd Neel String Orchestra K 2124

### Haydn

The seven last words from the Cross, Op. 51  
The Griller String Quartet AK 2139-47

### Mahler

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen—  
Song Cycle  
Eugenia Zareska (Mezzo-Soprano) with  
The London Philharmonic Orchestra  
(Conductor: Eduard van Beinum)  
AK 1624-5

### Mendelssohn

"Athalia" — Overture, Op. 74  
Dr. Heinz Unger conducting The  
National Symphony Orchestra K 1298

### Mozart

Symphony No. 32 in G major (Overture  
in the Italian style), K. 318  
Royalton Kisch conducting The  
National Symphony Orchestra K 2200

### Pergolesi

Stabat Mater  
Complete recording by  
Joan Taylor (Soprano), Kathleen Ferrier  
(Contralto) and The Nottingham Oriana  
Choir with The Boyd Neel String Orchestra  
(Conductor: Ray Henderson)  
AK 1517-21

### Priault Rainier

String Quartet No. 1  
The Amadeus Quartet AK 2278-9

### Reizenstein

Prologue, Variations and Finale  
Max Rostal (Violin) and  
Reisenstein (Piano) AK 1187-90

### Schubert

Symphony No. 6 in C major  
Josef Krips conducting  
The London Symphony Orchestra  
AK 2119-22

### Schumann

Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22  
Kathleen Long (Piano) AK 2300-2

### Vaughan Williams

On Wenlock Edge — Song Cycle  
Peter Pears (Tenor) with  
Benjamin Britten (Piano) and  
The Zorian String Quartet AM 585-7

### Verdi

"La Forza del Destino" — Overture  
Georg Solti conducting The  
London Philharmonic Orchestra X 298

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Decca advertisement featuring recordings 5, 6 and 7

## Composers, writers and performers

The varying length of these biographical notes does *not* reflect relative importance of the subjects; the longer items contain a lot of information not available or easily accessible in standard reference works. Principal sources of information are given at the end of each entry, followed by sources of additional details.

**"Æ" [George William Russell]** (b Lurgan, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland, 10 Apr 1867; d Bournemouth, 17 Jul 1935). Irish poet and painter. Although he regarded writing verse as his most important activity, he took part in Irish agrarian and political affairs, and became a friend of Yeats while studying at art school. He wrote theosophical works, fantasies expressing idealistic political views and numerous books of verse [Collected poems 1923, 1926]. For an intelligible account of the origin of his preferred pen-name ("Æ", from "Aeon") see the biography by Henry Summerfield (Colin Smythe, 1975). [[Ward: *Longman companion to twentieth century literature*. Longman 1970]]

The **Amadeus Quartet** arose from Max Rostal's encouragement of three of his violin pupils who had come to England in 1938-39: **Norbert Brainin** (b Vienna, 12 Mar 1923), **Siegmund Nissel** (b Vienna, 3 Jan 1922) and (Hans) **Peter Schidlof** (b Vienna 9 Jul 1922, d Sunderland [near Cockermouth, Cumbria], 15 Aug 1987). They joined forces with the cellist **Martin Lovett** (b London, 3 Mar 1927), and Max Rostal persuaded Peter Schidlof to take up the viola to make possible this eminent quartet (which started life under the name the Brainin Quartet). Imogen Holst donated £100 for the Amadeus Quartet to make its highly successful début in the Wigmore Hall, London on 10 January 1948. The Amadeus quickly became established as the leading quartet in Britain, and European tours soon followed. They did not have a wide repertory, but as well as the standard Classical works, they performed 20th-century quartets including those by Bartók,

Tippett and Britten (who wrote his third quartet for them). The cellist William Pleeth [q.v.] often joined them for the Schubert Quintet. The Amadeus Quartet was disbanded on the death of the violist Schidlof, of whom Martin Lovett said: "He is simply irreplaceable." [[NG; (obit.) *The Times* 18 Aug 87]]

**Arundel, Honor Morfydd** (b Llanarmon [near Pwllheli, Gwynedd, north-west Wales], 15 Aug 1919; d Hume [near Kelso, in the Scottish borders] 8 Jun 1973). British poet and novelist. She was educated at Hayes Court, Kent and Somerville College, Oxford (1938-9), married the Scottish actor Alex McCrindle in 1952, and lived latterly in Edinburgh and at the family cottage at Hume, becoming a prominent member of the Scottish Communist Party. Honor Arundel became known chiefly for her later work (from 1966) as a writer for teenage girls of realistic novels carrying social criticism (such as *The High House*, *Emma's Island*, *Emma in Love*). But she also worked in journalism and was for some years film critic on the Communist *Daily Worker* (now the *Morning Star*); she also had a play *The Home Game* produced by the BBC in 1960. She was co-editor (with Maurice Carpenter and Jack Lindsay) of *New Lyrical Ballads* [Editions Poetry London, 1945] which includes some of her own poems: *Refugees*, *Adam*, *Morning Shift*, and *His Mother*. Other verses appeared during the war in the magazines *Our Time* [see entry for Ben Frankel] and *Million*. Some of her poems were set to music by Ben Frankel and Geoffrey Corbett [q.v.]. The eminent left-wing Scottish poet "Hugh McDiarmid" (1892-1978) became a close friend and an admirer of her verses. [[*Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, Chevalier (ed.), St James Press, 3rd ed. 1978; (obit.) *Publishers Weekly*, 2 July 1973; pers. comm.: Alex Clark, Catherine Kerr-Dineen]]

**Blake, William** (b London, 28 Nov 1757; d London, 12 Aug 1827). English poet, painter, engraver and mystic, who was able to describe visionary experiences he had as a child in the countryside around London. Famous for his hand-illustrated series of lyrical and epic poems, notably *Jerusalem*

(from *Milton*), the *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of Experience* (1794), from which comes *The Tyger*. There are many books on his life and work.

**Busch, William** (b London, 25 Jun 1901; d Woolacombe (Devon), 30 Jan 1945). English composer of naturalised German parents. He studied at first in the USA then in Germany (from 1921-24), and had some piano lessons from Backhaus and Egon Petri. His main training was in London, from 1924 onwards, with Alan Bush, John Ireland and Bernard van Dieren for composition, which was his main interest. He began his career as a pianist, and he played his *Theme, variations and fugue* at a London recital in 1929; however, from 1935, concert appearances became rarer, although he played his piano Concerto under Boult in a 1939 broadcast. He wrote about 20 songs, and several of these and the *Nicholas Variations* for piano, inspired by his young son, were performed at CPNM SRs.

Although Busch suffered from ill-health, his widow has said that *New Grove* is wrong when it ascribes his move to Devon as being for health reasons: it was simply to be near his wife at the time of his daughter's birth. However, he became seriously ill while returning on a winter night from a visit to his wife at the nursing-home at Ilfracombe in North Devon and died at nearby Woolacombe. [[NG; Sheila Busch, BBC Radio 3 series *Forgotten Reputations?* 29 Dec 1989]]

**Chagrin, Francis** [real name Alexander Paucker] (b Bucharest, 15 Nov 1905; d London, 10 Nov 1972). British composer and conductor, born into a wealthy Romanian Jewish family. After qualifying as an engineer and working in the family business to please his father, he decided to devote himself to music, and went abruptly to study with Boulanger and Dukas in Paris, where he supported himself by playing the piano at night-clubs and writing light music. He later studied with Mátyás Seiber in London, finally settling there 1936. He became known as a composer of music for theatre and over 200 films (for instance *An Inspec-*

*tor calls, Greyfriars Bobby and The Colditz Story*); he also had many concert works published, including a piano concerto, a symphony, and music for wind instruments and for strings. He formed his own chamber ensemble, presenting new and unusual works in concerts and on the radio.

In 1943 he was one of the three founders of the CPNM; although he was its Secretary-Organiser and prime mover during its first years, he did not care to consider himself classed as an administrator. Ben Frankel's obituary notice referred to his sweetness of character and his "quite extraordinary devotion to [British composers'] interests." See also the front-cover photograph. [[NG; (obit., Ben Frankel) *MT* cxiv (1973), p65; *Concise Oxford Dict. of Music*, 3rd ed, OUP, 1980; H. Cole: *Rear guard for the avant-garde*, *The Guardian* 3 Apr 70, p10 (NG, following an ambiguous phrase in this article, gives an erroneous date of 1970 for the change CPNM to SPNM); *Catalogue of printed music in the British Library to 1980*, BL, 1981]]

**Corbett, Geoffrey** (b Haslemere, 21 Dec 1907). English composer, conductor and singing teacher. Corbett went to the Royal College of Music, studying harmony and theory with Armstrong Gibbs, and also piano and cello. He became a Julian Clifford Scholar in 1927, studying conducting with Malcolm Sargent and leaving finally in 1931. He won the Dove Prize in 1928 and the Tagore Gold medal in 1931. When Lilian Baylis opened Sadler's Wells, he got a job coaching singers and became chorus master. His conducting work continued mainly with choirs (including later the Choir of the Workers Music Association), but in 1935 he conducted the revival of Holst's *Savitri* at Sadler's Wells and in the following season *Don Giovanni*. He also did work with Sadler's Wells ballet: during the War he was in the Navy, and he tells of Ninette de Valois writing on his behalf after the War, so that he was released fifteen months early! He became an assistant to Constant Lambert from 1944 onwards; after a period as chairman of the WMA in the mid-1940s, he was by 1949 one of its vice-presidents

(along with several well-known British and American musicians - including Paul Robeson!). His interest in composing for voices arose as a student under Armstrong Gibbs, who gave him verses to set to music. He has kept up his composition and still coaches singers, but now only individually. Published work (WMA) includes settings of Honor Arundel's poems *Raiders*, *The Miners* and *The Recompense*. While he was one of the Sadler's Wells conductors, he wrote an article on *Ballet Music from the Conductor's Point of View* [1947] for the *Ballet Annual* [reprinted in *Ballet Decade*, ed Arnold Haskell, Adam & Charles Black, 1956]. [[Richard Shead: *Constant Lambert*, Simon Publications, 1973, p127; Dennis Arundell: *The Story of Sadler's Wells*, David & Charles, 2nd ed, 1978; WMA adverts, in Bush: *Music in the Soviet Union*, WMA, 1943, and Manning: *From Holst to Britten*, WMA, 1949; pers. comm.: RCM, Geoffrey Corbett]]

**Cummings, Henry Powell** (b Dublin, 22 Dec 1906; d Dulas, Herefordshire, 1 Apr 1989). English baritone of Irish birth, he was brought to Watford at the age of eight weeks. He contracted infantile paralysis at the age of four and spent much of his childhood in Guy's Hospital, and was given private tuition. After deciding to make music his career, he studied with Robert Radford at the Royal Academy, briefly with John Coates and then with Plunket Greene. After the BBC first engaged him (while still a student) he did a lot of oratorio and recital work, as well as broadcasting. He specialised in the songs of Liszt, studied lieder with Elena Gerhardt and broadcast a programme of Wolf songs. He became well-known for his singing of Christus in the Bach *St Matthew Passion*, one of his favourite works, which he recorded for Decca with Kathleen Ferrier (AK2001/21). His success as a teacher culminated in his becoming professor of singing (1949) and head of vocal studies at the Royal Academy of Music, retiring in 1982. He made only few commercial recordings; but his thorough guide to singing technique *Take a deep breath* has recently been published

[Thames Publishing, 1993]. In recitals he was often accompanied by his wife, the pianist Nora Newby. [[Brook: *Singers of Today*, Rockliff, 1949; Decca catalogue; pers. comm.: Mark Wildman, Nora Newby]]

**Douglas, Roy** (b Tunbridge Wells, 12 Dec 1907). English composer and arranger, and one of the three founders of the CPNM. He was a mainly self-taught musician, yet he attained the responsibility of helping Vaughan Williams prepare his works for performance from 1944 onwards. In his book *Working with R.V.W.* (Oxford, 1972), Douglas recalled these experiences, and he has also edited the *Letters of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (British Library publications, 1988). He was orchestral pianist for the de Basil and other companies (1933-38), and pianist-organist of the LSO (1937-42). He wrote much music for films, mostly short items for the war-time Ministry of Information, but notably for the 1943 Ealing tragi-comedy about firefighters, *The bells go down*. However he is better known as an arranger than as a composer; he made a most successful orchestration of Chopin's music, for the ballet *Les Sylphides* [an early recorded excerpt is by the LPO with Walter Goehr on Columbia DX844], and orchestrated Richard Addinsell's music for films. *New Grove* lists as chief among his original works an *Elegy* (1946) for string orchestra, *Festivities* (1972) for full orchestra and *Six Dance Caricatures* for wind quintet (1939); this last was played at a National Gallery concert in 1944 and was put on the RL [CPNM 21 April 44], but Decca withdrew their support before his "turn" came for recording. [[G5; NG; WERM; pers. comm.]]

**Frankel, Ben[jamin]** (b London, 31 Jan 1906; d London, 12 Febr 1973). English composer, the son of a synagogue beadle. Having learnt the piano and violin in his youth, he became apprenticed as a watchmaker. He earned his living for a while as a violinist in night-clubs and cafés, as well as pianist and teacher of music, at the same time studying piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music. From 1931, he



An EMG Mk.10 "Oversize" Gramophone, English,  
circa 1947. Estimate: £2,500-3,500.

# MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

3RD MARCH 1994

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was in demand for orchestrations of West end musical comedies and reviews, which he also conducted, including Noël Coward's *Operette* - recorded evidence of this part of his career is on HMV records B8738,39,41, where he conducts performances of *The Stately Homes of England* and other songs from *Operette*. During the war, he became one of the four editors of the left-wing journal *Our Time* (successor in 1941 to *Poetry and the People*), and his string Trio was given at a National Gallery Concert. He gave up theatre work in 1944, but continued to write music for many films such as *Give us This Day*, *The Chiltern Hundreds* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. With wider performance, broadcast and publication, his reputation as a serious composer increased after World War II. [[G5; NG; *Our Time* [periodical]; Seeley and Bennett: *London Musical Shows on record*, General Gramophone Publications, 1989]]

**Newton, Ivor** (b London, 15 Dec 1892; d London, 21 Apr 1981). English pianist and accompanist. Early on, he studied with the pianist York Bowen, but after he decided to devote himself to the art of accompanying, he studied with Conraad van Bos in Berlin and Victor Biegel in London. He toured extensively with the most eminent of artists, and many have sought his services: Flagstad, Gerhardt, Gigli, Pons, Schipa, Schumann, Chaliapin, Supervia and Teyte; Casals, Feuermann and Piatigorsky. [[G5; NG; *The Annual Obituary 1981*, St James Press]]

**Orr, Robin** (b Brechin, Angus, 2 Jun 1909). Scottish composer and teacher. He had an early opportunity to learn the organ, as his father was an amateur organist who actually built an organ in the family home. After education at Loretto School, Edinburgh, he studied organ with Alcock at the Royal College of Music. In 1929 he was elected organ scholar at Pembroke College Cambridge, and was later a pupil of Alfredo Casella and then Nadia Boulanger. He was Assistant Lecturer in Music at Leeds University before World War II and in 1947 Lecturer at Cambridge. He became profes-

sor of music at Glasgow University in 1956, returning to Cambridge in 1965 to take the chair of music, from which he retired in 1976. His music developed from the neo-classicism style of Stravinsky, Hindemith and Berg. As well as operas (including *Weir of Hermiston*), symphonies and incidental music to Shakespeare and Sophocles, he has written several chamber works, and he has contributed substantially to Anglican church music. [[G5; NG]]

**Osborn, Franz** (b Berlin, 11 Jul 1905; d Basle, 8 Jun 1955). Naturalised British pianist of German origin. At Berlin University, he had lessons in composition from Franz Schreker and in conducting from Fritz Busch, and studied piano under Leonid Kreutzer and later Schnabel. He gave concerts in most of the countries of Europe, with many eminent conductors, and broadcast numerous recitals with the violinist Max Rostal. He was famous for his interpretation of Mozart's later concertos. [[NG]]

**Pleeth, William** (b London, 12 Jan 1916). English cellist of a Polish musical family. Having won a scholarship at fourteen to study with Julius Klengel at Leipzig, he made his German debut a year later. Following his English debut in 1933, he was invited to appear with many leading conductors; in 1937 he met the pianist **Margaret Good**, whom he married. They gave their first recital at the Wigmore Hall in 1938, followed by a broadcast and numerous concerts throughout the country. They were invited by Decca to make the first of many recordings (music by Mendelssohn and Chopin on K914/6, K918/22, Brahms on K930/3 and Grieg on K1048/51); and works were composed especially for them by Edmund Rubbra, Gordon Jacob, Franz Reizenstein, William Wordsworth and Phyllis Tate. Their partnership remained unbroken until their retirement in 1980. William Pleeth was professor of the cello and of chamber music at the Guildhall School of Music. He now devotes himself almost exclusively to teaching, and regularly visits Aldeburgh to give master classes and

performances at the Pears-Britten school; his book *The Cello* has won world-wide acclaim. Among many honours, he was awarded the OBE in 1989 for his services to music. [[NG; Decca catalogues; pers. comm.: Margaret Good]]

**Rainier, Priaulx** (b Howick, Natal, 3 Feb 1903; d Besse-en-Chandesse, Auvergne, France, 10 Oct 1986). British Composer. After early childhood in Zululand, she studied violin in Cape Town and in 1920 won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music. She then settled in London as violinist and teacher until 1935, when an anonymous grant enabled her to concentrate on composition. She studied briefly with Nadia Boulanger (1937) and became professor of composition at the RAM (1943-61). Although there is some evidence of the influence of Bartók, the African background also affected her music in subtle ways. Her Quartet [no 1] of 1939 brought her to the attention of a wider public. A useful brief survey of Priaulx Rainier's work and musical style can be found in a recent review of a CD of her chamber works [Gramophone Nov 1992, p142]. [[NG; Baker's Biographical Dict of Musicians, 8th ed, Schirmer, 1992]]

**Reizenstein, Franz** (b Nuremberg, 7 Jun 1911; d London, 15 Oct 1968). British composer of German origin, from an artistic and musical family. He went to the Berlin State Academy, studying composition with Hindemith, and also piano. When the Nazis forced him to leave Germany in 1934, he studied with Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music, and took private piano lessons with Solomon. After the war (when he was interned as alien), he eventually became professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music (1962-8). His works include music for radio, several chamber pieces, concertos for cello, for piano and for violin. He also wrote piano music, including a sonata. He formed his own piano trio, and often appeared as soloist in concerts and recitals. [[NG]]

**Rostal, Max** (b Teschen, Silesia, 7 Aug 1905; d Berne, 6 Aug 1991). British violinist and teacher of Austrian birth. After touring Europe as a prodigy, he studied with both Arnold Rosé in Vienna and Carl Flesch in Berlin (where he was Flesch's assistant 1928-30). He settled in London after being driven from Germany by the Nazi régime, becoming a professor at the Guildhall School of Music. He played with all the important orchestras in Britain, and from 1939-45 played frequently for the war-time forces and factory workers. He was a staunch supporter of new music, introducing a number of several new works by British and other composers. [[NG; (obit.) *The Independent* Aug 91]]

**Seiber, Mátyás** [Matthias Scheiber] (b Budapest, 4 May 1905; d Kruger National Park, South Africa, 24 Sep 1960). British composer and teacher of Hungarian origin, and one of the three founders of the CPNM. Seiber came from a musical family, and learned to play the cello; he studied at the Budapest Academy of Music with Adolf Shiffer (cello) and Kodály (composition). When he entered a wind sextet for a Budapest competition, both Bartók and Kodály resigned from the jury in protest when it was not awarded the prize. Seiber taught in Frankfurt at the Hoch Conservatory, where his class in the theory and practice of jazz became famous; he also conducted at Frankfurt theatres. From 1935, he lived in England, at first writing music for animated films; from 1942, he taught at Morley College (at Tippett's invitation) for fifteen years. He became a widely known and respected teacher of composition, remaining in close touch with continental musical life; his pupils included Francis Chagrin. He also maintained his interest in jazz, and wrote a three-part article *Rhythmic Freedom in Jazz?* for *The Music Review* [MR vi (1945), pp30-41, 89-94, 160-71]. His own music owes a debt to Kodály, Bartók and Schoenberg, and always shows good humour (he wrote pieces for the 1956 Hoffnung Festival). He wrote much film music, choral and solo songs (including a

Many thanks and regards to all

cantata on James Joyce's *Ulysses*) and several chamber and instrumental pieces. In 1960 he was invited to lecture at South African universities, and during the visit was killed in a car crash.

Besides his *Phantasy* for cello and piano recorded for Decca, his arrangements for dance bands also appeared on 78s in 1931 [see Ernie Bayly's review of the *German National Discography: Hillandale News* 193 August 1993, p299]: he also arranged the *Warsaw Ghetto Song* recorded for the WMA label Topic (TRC.64), conducted by Alan Bush [PA pers. collection]. [NG]]

**Stephens, James** (b Dublin, 9 Feb 1880; d London, 26 Dec 1950). Irish poet and novelist. He was virtually self-taught amidst poverty, and was discovered accidentally by the poet "Æ." He was an ardent supporter of the movement for Irish independence, and played a practical part in the revival of interest in the Gaelic language and culture. His prose fantasy *The Crock of Gold* (1912) brought him sudden success, and he wrote much verse [Collected poems 1926, 1954]. He later claimed to have born the same day as James Joyce (2 Feb 1882). [[Hilary Pyle: *James Stephens*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965; A.C.Ward: *Longman companion to twentieth century literature*, Longman, 1970]]

## Principal sources

The following general sources are cited, with the abbreviations shown:

[NG] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed Sadie, (Macmillan, 1980)

[G5] *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed (Blom), (Macmillan, 1954)

[WERM] *The World's Encyclopædia of Recorded Music* Clough and Cuming, (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1952)

[MT] *The Musical Times* [periodical, London]

[MR] *The Music Review* [periodical, London]

[CPNM] Minutes of meetings of full CPNM/SPNM

[Exec] Minutes of meetings of Executive Committee of the CPNM/SPNM

[SPNM50] *SPNM fifty: fiftieth anniversary programme* (SPNM, March 1993)

Other individual references are given in full.

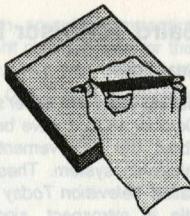
## Acknowledgments

My grateful thanks go to many people who have cheerfully given me important details, insights or even just encouragement. All have helped to make it possible to put together this account of the early CPNM's attempts at recording their musical recommendations.

First of all, Richard Steele and Elizabeth Webb of the SPNM, who have been most helpful with their patient and kindly encouragement and enthusiasm in allowing me access to the SPNM archives: they also gave me useful contacts; Victorine Martineau of the British Council Archives who likewise let me go through Musical Advisory Committee meeting minutes; Aubrey Bowman, John Jordan (chair) and John Miller (archivist) of the Workers' Music Association; the British Music Information Centre (whose existence I discovered quite by accident): quite incredibly, it turned out to have the scores of *all* the pieces recorded; Honor Arundel's daughter Catherine Kerr-Dineen and Alex Clark; Mark Wildman and Nora Newby (Cummings); the composers Robin Orr (who provided the CPNM brochures reproduced here), Roy Douglas (a co-founder of the CPNM), Alan Bush and his biographer Ronald Stevenson, Howard Ferguson, Geoffrey Corbett, Arthur Jacobs; Norbert Brainin, William Pleeth and Margaret Good; Lewis Foreman; John Amis; the National Sound Archive; the BBC Written Archives; The Royal College of Music; Bill Shaman and the late Ivor Davies, who both took time and trouble to dig out information not otherwise easily available to me; John Parry and Marc Johnston of the Decca Record Company Ltd, Raymond Glaspole and Tully Potter. Last, but certainly not least, I must give special thanks to Michael Smith and Brian Rust for the essential dating and checking of the Decca discs.

The photograph of Francis Chagrin and extracts from minutes of CPNM/SPNM committee meetings are reproduced by kind permission of the SPNM. The List of Recommended Works and the 100th Studio Recital programme were made available by courtesy of Professor Robin Orr, and are reproduced with permission of the SPNM. Extracts from minutes of British Council Music Advisory Committee meetings are reproduced by kind permission of the British Council Archive.

## LETTERS



### Help please!

Dear Sir,

I am prompted to write to *Hillandale News* following the purchase of an unusual portable gramophone.

It is a 'Portalec Model 9A - Mechanical Field Phonograph', serial No. 36715, made by the Pacific Sound Equipment Company of Hollywood, California, for the Special Services of the U. S. Army during World War II.

The case, measuring 445 x 385 x 210mm deep, is made of plywood covered with a 'military' green coloured material resembling linoleum. Wire gauze covers the mouth of a plywood horn internally, to protect debris from flying into it!

Unusually for a portable, the machine has a double spring motor made by the General Industries Co. of Ohio. The sound-box, which has a very basic aluminium diaphragm, is of anonymous English origin. The instructions for use of the machine are to be found on a small plaque on the inside of the lid and appear to assume that the operator will have little knowledge of gramophones.

It has already been suggested to me that the gramophone may have been fabricated to be completely disposable! If one considers the general lack of finesse, together with the probable locations and movement of its original users, then, this idea is far from inconceivable, and indeed, provides food for thought.

I would be very grateful to receive any information from readers who can help. In particular, I would be interested to know the year of issue, how many were made, who originally used them and how, especially when one considers the weight which hardly renders them 'portable'.

Many thanks and regards to all.

Steve Miller,  
Evesham, Worcestershire

{If anyone who can help would write to me I will pass on any information received to Steve. Ed.}



### Léon Scott and Thomas A. Edison

Dear Chris,

I don't think that many of our Society's members have been honoured, as I have, by a castigation from our distinguished patron Oliver Berliner.

In his letter to the October 1993 issue of *Hillandale News* he takes me to task for my "glaring misstatement" that Edison "had invented sound recording". I, of course, used this very general phrase to encapsulate an Edison achievement or, as is said in the panel game, 'the whole thing'. It wasn't, in any event, part of a learned treatise on the history of sound recording but rather and only a fragment from an obituary on Edison's son Theodore.

In any case the words were addressed to a specialist magazine and to the knowledgeable members of our Society. I am sure I haven't polluted the historical record for them.

Our Editor, too, was kind enough to advise,

in a footnote to Mr Berliner's letter, that readers should refer to George Taylor's excellent article on Léon Scott's phonograph. George, very rightly, also credits Young, Duhamel, Wertheim and Koenig with inventing or improving the recording of sound, some of the systems incidentally pre-dating Scott's invention by fifty years. Perhaps, therefore, Mr Berliner might like to amend his letter accordingly. Amendment, too, will be needed to that old Gershwin song "They all Laughed" in which it is Edison who is credited with recording sound, one of a number of firsts claimed in the song. Scanning could be a problem though with the substitution of Edison in the lyric with Young or Duhamel or Scott or Koenig, and so on and so on.

Mr Berliner also claims in his letter that "sadly" Edison failed to copy Scott's lateral cut (sic) format. I'm only too glad Edison didn't, not only for giving contemporaneously (and now, with his hill-and-dale

method of recording) a better quality of sound replay from cylinder than that obtained from the contemporaneous flat disc recorded laterally. Perhaps, too, it should be remembered that it was the hill-and-dale element present on the stereo LP disc that made stereo replay possible.

Finally, if Edison had copied Scott's so called lateral cut format we wouldn't have a title for our own *Hillandale News*.

With all good wishes,  
Joe Pengelly, Mannamead, Plymouth

## Wind-up Gramophones

Sir,

I have in front of me the August 17th 1935 copy of *The Wireless and Gramophone Trader*, some 110 pages, which is the special bumper edition, covering the major trade exhibition at Olympia - not then, but subsequently known as *Radiolympia* - and covering the launch of the industry's 1936 models.

Every stand at the Exhibition is reviewed in detail - and this includes all the traditional wind-up gramophone manufacturers amongst which were The Gramophone Co. Ltd. (HMV), Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. and Decca.

The issue also includes expensive advertising spreads from all the majors, showing illustrations of their 1936 models, including of course radiograms. Nowhere in this publication is there a solitary mention of a wind-up model.

Certainly most wind-up cabinet grangs had by then been superseded by the electrically amplified gramophones and radiograms, but there was still a continuing healthy market for wind-up portables.

Were wind-ups (even portables) considered so 'old hat' at the time, that they would detract from the 'modern' image of the big names, even though they still made and sold wind-up portables?

With your erudite readership, I am sure someone has the answers. I believe that an article on the 'wind-up of the wind-ups', with the relevant cut-off dates, would provide fascinating reading.

Yours faithfully,  
A. L. Hammond, St. Davids, Dyfed

P.S. What were the production cut-off dates of, for instance, the HMV 202, the 162, the 126 and 127, the Columbia 100, 201 and 202, HMV 99, 101, and 102 and the various models of Decca portable?

{Any one feel like obliging Mr Hammond? Ed.}

## Baird Televisor Discs

Dear Editor,

Having read my father's old *Meccano Magazine* for October 1930, I have been intrigued since childhood about the achievements of Baird in his primitive television system. These were reviewed in a book called *Television Today and Tomorrow* - an amusing title in retrospect, since 99.99% of all television achievements lay far in the future. One claimed invention was *Phonovision*, whereby a vision transmission could be recorded on a grooved disc. I have often wondered if this system actually worked, and my interest was rekindled recently when I apparently missed a broadcast which touched on the subject.

In theory the process seems simple enough. The vision signal, broadcast on the Medium Wave, simply served to vary the intensity of the scanning spot of light forming the picture, obviously easily encoded in a record groove. The position of the spot on the scan at any instant was determined by a motor in both the transmitter and receiver, synchronised by an additional pulse of some kind in the signal. I guess this could also be encoded, but I believe that this synchronisation was the cause of most viewers' problems.

I would be most interested to hear if any such recordings were ever made, and if it is still possible to replay them through a televisor today. It occurs to me that this would be the only way for anyone nowadays to experience the quality (or lack of it) achievable on the Baird experimental system. I wonder what surface noise and groove wear look like?

Yours sincerely,  
Martyn Dowell, Freemantle, Southampton

## Repairing Sound-Boxes

Dear Chris,

Re Jim Goodall's interesting article on refurbishing the Exhibition Sound-Box (*Hillandale News* October 1993) having given sound-boxes a new lease of life myself, may I make the following suggestions?

To effect a straightforward replacement for a damaged mica diaphragm, or, rather than splitting a serviceable diaphragm in two, I have used perspex of a suitable thickness, available from model shops. This same source has also been useful in obtaining rubber tubing for replacement gaskets.

As regards replacing broken sound-box retention springs, I have used redundant clock springs for this purpose. By annealing them, they can be straightened, shaped, punched and drilled with reasonable ease.

Yours sincerely,  
Rob Gillies, Bearsden, Glasgow

## Amy Castles and Violet Essex

Dear Editor,

Re Mr Badham's letter in the October 1993 issue of *Hillandale News*, I have checked my source for Amy Castles year of birth and my source does give 25th July 1884; so that if I am in error so is my source. Mr Badham is quite correct in stating that Jacques Bouchy's name should read Bouhy, which is what I have down in my pencilled notes. I expect I mistyped the name as Bouchy.

Re. Rick Hardy's letter Violet Essex (2), although that lady's first recording session for Beka Records of Germany, in 1910, did result in one title by her appearing on Encore 551 and another title by her appearing on Encore 552 (not 561 as given by Rust), the three other titles on those two discs were not by Essex. With one recorded item followed by another on each side the discs were only well-named as Encore where the artists were the same for both titles recorded; this did occur on some sides. The disc mentioned by Rick Hardy, as detailed by Brian Rust, shows only the regular matrix number in the 40,000 series block (Beka having designated 40,000 to 41,999 as its English matrix series, irrespective of the size of the discs). Encore Records also had their additional matrix numbers, in a 500 series (560 being the lowest known) for London recordings and a 750/800 matrix series for Berlin recordings. Confusingly Encore Records had their (catalogue) Serial No. also in a 500 series! They played for about 3 minutes 20 seconds.

For Peter Cliffe's benefit, *Coming thro' the Rye*, with Beka matrix 40843, was on Encore Record 552, not 561, as in Rust; 561 being the Encore matrix number. The *Dear Heart* title on Serial No. 551 (matrix 40842) had the Encore matrix 560. The Encore matrices applied to both artists who appear with different titles on the same side of a disc (as do the Beka matrices).

It would appear that where two different artists were engaged to record on one side, the recording machine would be halted after the first artist had finished, then the out-of-pitch dividing groove in-

scribed, with the second artist ready to start recording the second title. The out-of-pitch groove was inscribed, even where the artist was the same for the whole side.

The Encore Records, as far as I am aware, never received any mention in our trade periodicals, viz. the two editions of *The Talking Machine News*, *The Sound Wave* and *The Phono' Trader*. The label was not registered as a trade mark either in the U. K. or in Germany by Beka Records G.m.b.H. The British agent for Beka Records, Otto Ruhl, never mentioned them in his advertisements - so where and how were they sold?

Their origin lies in the *Veni Vidi Vici - Beka Grand Record* discs introduced on to the German market in December 1909, the registered trade mark for which had been applied for on September 26th previously. A number of their two-titled sides appear on Encores.

A second series of Encore records is known carrying some London recordings; that had an 'E' prefixed serial no. series, probably starting at E 800 and, again, for Peter Cliffe's benefit (and not in Rust), E 800 has Violet Essex singing *Daisies* (Beka matrix unknown, but Encore matrix is 566). The second title is a piano solo by Henry Geehl. The soprano is also on Encore E 805 (not in Rust) singing with Harry Thorne (baritone) *Trot Here, Trot There* from *Messenger's Véronique* (Beka matrix 40891 and Encore matrix 578). The second title is from Wallace's *Maritana* sung by Welsh Eisteddfod prize winning tenor John Roberts.

I would be grateful for any information regarding Encore Records with catalogue serial numbers 550 and 553 onwards; for E 801 to E 804; E 806; E 808; E 809; and any beyond E 810.

An April 1910 announcement, stating that the *Veni Vidi Vici* discs were on sale at the Leipzig Fair, said that there was no intention of selling such records in Britain yet.

Yours sincerely,  
Frank Andrews, Neasden, London

[Frank also included a list of Violet Essex recordings on Grammavox, Favorite and Edison Bell. If anyone wants these details they should send a stamped addressed envelope to me and I will forward a photocopy of the list to them. Ed.]

## Amy Castles

Dear Chris,

Regarding Amy Castles in issue 194, perhaps I should chime in. It must not be common knowledge that she also recorded in the U.S.A. for the Lyric Label (Lyrophone Co. of America, to use their official name). This was circa 1918 and while I do have data on her recordings in my files, I have misplaced them at the moment. At that time, Lyric was manufacturing a fine-grooved, steel-needle type vertically cut disc of high quality, from their plant in Newark, New Jersey. If anyone knows the dates during which she was in the U.S.A., it might be useful in dating the recording sessions for this manufacturer.

Best,

Bill Bryant, Portland, Maine, U.S.A.

## Phonographs in aeroplanes

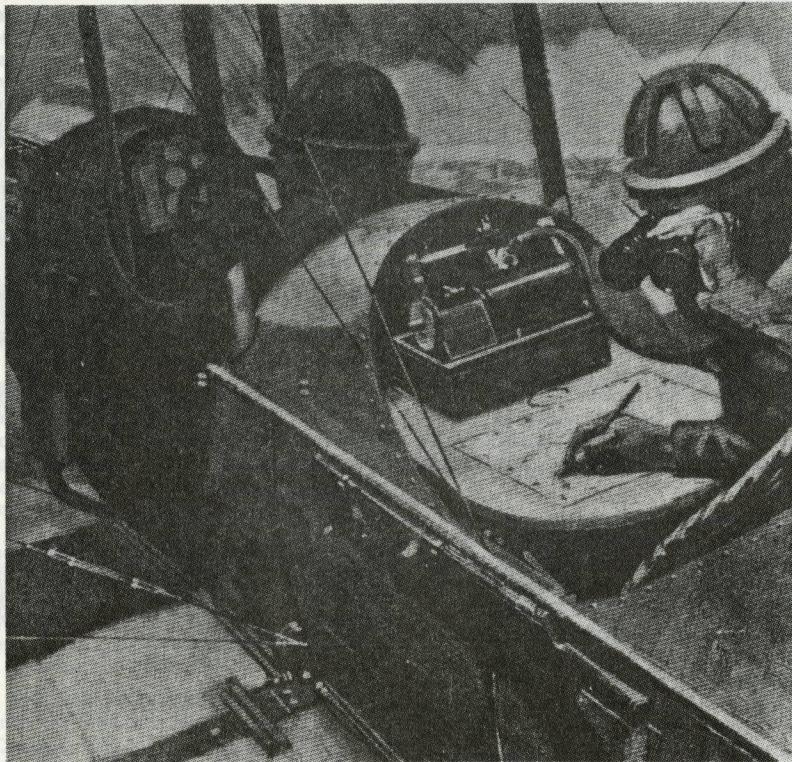
Dear Chris,

The enclosed picture shows a World War I observation plane. The observer is mapping the enemy and he also has a phonograph with what looks like a speaking tube. I doubt that he is listening to Amberols - more likely, he is recording some of his observations.

The picture comes from a book, *Flying Aces of World War I*, by Gene Gurney, published in 1965. The picture itself looks authentic to me. Such a use of the phonograph, particularly in aircraft, is a bit unusual, and I wonder whether any reader knows any more about such uses of the phonograph, as opposed to merely entertainment?

Yours sincerely,

George Taylor, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire



*Drawing of a two-seater reconnaissance plane in which the observer is mapping the position of the enemy.*

## Violet Essex and Una Bourne

Dear Chris,

I am most grateful to Messrs. Badham, Gray and Hardy for the information about Violet Essex's records. Mark Gray's HMV C 1054, pairing *A Woman's No* (Baker and Essex) with *Silhouettes* (George Baker solo) was recorded in 1922 in late March or early April.

The *Lady of the Rose* opened at Daly's on February 21st 1922, with Phyllis Dare as the leading lady. It was a successful musical, achieving 514 performances.

If it isn't too much trouble, I would be grateful if Mr Gray would tape both sides for me. Naturally I would refund the cost of the tape and the postage.

It seems odd that so little is known about Una Bourne. Why did reference books ignore her? She toured with Melba and recorded (for HMV) with the famous violinist Marjorie Hayward. Her many records included her own tasteful compositions. Perhaps an Australian reader can tell us more about her?

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cliffe, "Rutland", 63 Wellingham Avenue, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2UL

## Violet Essex

Dear Sir,

As the correspondence on this lady seems to be continuing, it may be appropriate at this point to note several amendments to Brian Rust's discography.

D 37 "James Reed" should be Joseph Reed.

matrix Ho 4550af is from *The Gondoliers*, not *The Pirates of Penzance* as implied, and was issued. This recording went through several editions, with Derek Oldham and Tudor Davies replacing John Harrison on some later matrices substituted for older ones.

D 727-8 "John" Hay should be James Hay.

Yours faithfully,

Michael P. Walters, Tring, Herts.

## Telharmonium

Dear Chris,

Whilst leafing through a pile of old magazines in search of talking machine advertisements I came across a report of an amazing invention by a Dr Thaddeus Cahill of a machine called a TELHARMONIUM.

The concept of "transmitting music to every home" would seem to be rather advanced for 1907! However it would not for the poor or faint-hearted as the equipment would seem to require a small hall to house it.

Does any reader know if this ever got past the prototype stage or if Dr Cahill became involved with any other inventions associated with the transmission of sound?

Yours sincerely,

Steve Paget, London SE9

{Note: Steve included a photocopy of a very large and detailed page of pictures from *Illustrated London News* 23 February 1907 which, however, would not have reproduced satisfactorily on the A5 page.}

## OBITUARY

News has been received of the death after a heart attack on September 5th 1993, of the Vice-President of the Phonograph Society of New South Wales.

Some members may recall him joining us at Curtain Road in the late 1950s when he was a very young man newly arrived from South Africa and demonstrating various types of cylinders including Concert and brown wax to a mostly elderly audience whose hill-and-dale preferences were firmly fixed on Blue Amberols and Edison Discs. He soon won their support and respect and was a popular member.

In due time he settled in Australia and moved up in the world of electronics and in his spare time was one of the forces that made the New South Wales Society a powerful force in our hobby, especially with the launching of cassettes, then CDs of notable recordings, rising to become its President and giving a boost to *The Journal*. This is now the informative *Sound Record*.

His death took place at an early age for these times and leaves a space that will be hard to fill and we extend our sympathies to his wife Bronwyn and his mother Peggy. G.L.F.

# MEETINGS



## London Meeting, 15th July 1993

Timothy Massey in his *Victorian Pot Boilers* gave us a glimpse of the sophisticated era of entertainers and home entertainment which later competed with radio and was eventually smothered by television.

Composers dealt with in turn, with their collaborating songwriters, started with Paoli Tosti (1846-1916) with his *My Dreams* to the words of Weatherly (1848-1933), sung here by Tom Burke. Tosti was musical tutor to the Royal family, singing duets with Queen Victoria. Another popular ballad *My Old Shako* has little meaning to the generation of today but it made Henry Trotter (1855-1912) famous. It was sung here in the 1925 version by Harry Dearth. Trotter is also remembered for *In Old Madrid*. James L. Molloy (1837-1907) set Clifton Bingham's poem *Love's Old Sweet Song* to music, here sung by Edna Thornton in 1925.

John L. Hatton (1809-1886) was a true Victorian composer collaborating with W. H. Bellamy for *Simon the Cellarer*, the rights of which he sold for £10. Charles Santley popularised the piece, often accompanied by the composer. *To Anthea* is another composition which Santley recorded in 1903.

Michael William Balfe (1808-1852) set Tennyson's *Maud* (first published in 1850) to music. Part of this cycle was *Come into the Garden, Maud* here sung for us by Heddle Nash. *Killarney* is another of his compositions, set to verses by Edmund O'Rourke Falconer (1814-1879). Originally intended for inclusion in an opera it was sung here by John McCormack, recorded during his first Victor session in 1910.

Michael Watson is remembered for his ballad *Anchored*, first published in the 1870s. Another of his compositions *Thy Sentinel am I* was sung for us by Robert Radford in a 1913 recording. Charles Ridgwell and Will Godwin composed *If Those Lips Could Only Speak*, here sung for us by Peter Dawson in a 1922 recording.

Charles Kingsley is mainly remembered for *Three Fishers Went Sailing* for which John Hullah (1812-1884) wrote the music. Another title sung here by

Emma Eames is *I Once Had a Sweet Little Doll, Dears*, taken from the *Water Babies*, was published in 1863. Frederic Clay (1838-1889) pandered to the Victorian taste of the exotic. Collaborating with Will Gorman Wills they published the song cycle *Lalla Rookh* from which comes *I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby*, here sung for us by Edward Lloyd in a 1907 recording.

Frederick William Nicholls Crouch (1808-1896) was the composer who set Julia Mary Crawford's words to music and paid £10 to have the composition published. It is reputed to have netted him £15,000 in royalties. Crouch himself sang the piece whilst on an American tour in his 89th year! Adelina Patti here sings *Kathleen Mavourneen* at the age of 63, recorded in 1906. Airlie Dix set the poem of Francis Darron entitled *The Trumpeter* to music. It is sung here by Dennis Noble in 1943 recording. Dix was, for a period, accompanist to The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. Dan Leno arrived to make recordings but turned up without a pianist. Dix filled in. This would be around September 1901. (Can any member tell us the length of time of his service as G&T's accompanist? Fondness for strong spirits is reputed to have led to his downfall.)

Charles Gounod (1818-1893), rightly famous for his operatic compositions, composed *Jesus of Nazareth* sung here by Malcolm McEachern. Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) famous for his Savoy Operas composed to the lyrics of William Schwenck Gilbert also composed more serious works like *The Golden Legend* and *The Lost Chord* (reputedly composed at the bedside of his dying brother Frederick). This song would alone have kept Sullivan in a comfortable life-style for the rest of his days even if he had never composed another note. Clara Butt made it famous. The poem is by Adelaide Anne Proctor. Another religious title is *The Holy City* published in 1892. Composed by Michael Maybrick under his pseudonym Stephen Adams (1844-1913). Words are by Frederick Weatherly (1848-1933). Adams is remembered mainly for his nautical ballads. When double-sided records came in *The Holy City* was often paired with *The Star of Bethlehem*.

Willoughby Hunter Weiss (1820-1867) was a popular bass singer of the 1890s and it was he who set Longfellow's *The Village Blacksmith* to music. It was sung for us by Norman Allin in a 1919 recording. Balfe also set Longfellow's words to music in *Excelsior*, sung here by Robert Radford and John Harrison in a recording they made in 1908.

*Home Sweet Home* was Patti's ballad, sung on every suitable occasion. Composed by Sir Henry Bishop (1786-1853) who also gave us *Lo, Here the Gentle Lark* and *My Pretty Jane* (with its alternative title of *The Bloom is on the Rye*). The verses are by Edward

Fitzball and, though composed in 1838, it lay gathering dust because Bishop was not satisfied with it. Rescued by Ben Davies, it was sung here by him in a 1901 recording, accompanied by his friend Landon Ronald.

The ballad *The Admiral's Broom* composed by Frederick Bevan (1856-1939) is a description of the famous Dutch Admiral Toms. Again the words are by Frederick Weatherly. Another composition *The Flight of Ages* was popularised by the contralto Carrie Herwin, but it was sung here by Harold Wilde. Time was running short and Timothy concluded his evening with *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* composed by Joseph Philip Knight (1812-1887) with words by Mrs Willard of Troy, New York, U. S. A., written during his American tour in 1839. It was sung here by Harry Lauder.

The audience appreciated Timothy's programme and we hope he can return at some future date to let us hear some more of the composers of the Victorian era like Maud Valerie White, Julius Benedict and Denza. Thanks, Timothy, for an enjoyable evening and sharing with us these songs and ballads from a bygone age, which are rarely heard nowadays.

G.W.

## London Meeting, 19th August 1993

George Woolford in his analysis of recordings by opera and concert singers concentrated on the year 1904, particularly those who were tempted into the recording studio for the first time. These included Melba, Albani, Farrar, Edward Lloyd, Maria Gay, Giorgini, Garden, Boronat and Boninsegna, and several whose names may not be so familiar and left only one or two records. Melba had been known to record privately earlier and it was a possibility that her G&Ts 03023/4 (Mad Scene from *Hamlet*) were the first consecutive sides devoted to an operatic aria. Nearly all the arias and songs were from G&T or Victor originals and were liberally illustrated by slides of performers, labels and 1904 publicity material.

From their attention the audience was well-satisfied with the presenter's choice and he had taken his usual trouble of preparing programme sheets with technical and personal details of all involved, including the recording engineer. With the quantity of material on his shelves George Woolford is assured of an annual place in our programmes for a long time and has a happy knack of being entertaining on a humid evening.

A London Correspondent

## Midlands Group Meeting held at the Carrs Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on Saturday 18th September 1993 at 7pm

An augmented audience of Midlands Group members, members from London and others were treated to a programme by an 'outside' speaker - the first we have had for some time. This was a programme on the lifework of the banjo virtuoso, John Pidoux, and was given by his grandson Tom Poole.

Mr Poole began with a detailed history of Mr Pidoux (13th August 1875 to 13th December 1953), who settled in Sutton Coldfield (in the West Midlands) for many years although he died in Sidmouth, Devon. Extracts from the magazine *The Banjo World* from the 1890s illustrated Mr Pidoux's activities and we learned that at this time orchestras or bands formed mainly of banjos were very popular and Mr Pidoux led such bands in the Birmingham area.

We were all waiting for musical examples of John Pidoux's work and in the second part of the evening's entertainment Mr Poole introduced us to some of his grandfather's recordings. Members of the Midland Group helped him with operating the various machines. Pieces of music we heard included:

*A Plantation Episode* (Pathé c.1912)  
*Popcorn* (Pioneer cylinder c.1904)  
*Mandolin Solo* (private cylinder recording)  
*Nigger in a Fit on* (private cylinder recording)  
*Queen of Diamonds* (Phono Disc 12" c. 1908)

Others recordings were heard on Neophone, John Bull, Beka, Popular etc. Most of the records were inherited from his grandfather and they showed what a fine player John Pidoux was. They are a priceless historical document of an early recording artist.

The time allotted for this programme was too short and Tom Poole promised to come again and complete his survey of his grandfather's art. The well deserved applause the audience gave him told him he would be more than welcome.

Our thanks go to Mr Poole and to Frank Andrews, Chris Hamilton and Len Watts and the other visitors for travelling such long distances to support this meeting.

Geoff Howl

## Annual General Meeting

At the Society's AGM held at St. Matthew's Church Hall, Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton on Saturday 25th September 1993 the Chairman, Peter Martland, welcomed all present and thanked the Midlands Group for their hospitality and for arranging the venue. In his report for the year Peter stated that the Society had made its application to become registered as a charity. On Counsel's advice the Society applied to the Charity Commissioners before it registered as a company without guarantee, as it would be easier to make any changes to the rules before the Society becomes a company rather than afterwards. All being well we should be granted our request during the next year and a special general meeting would be called when required, to approve the new rules and changes. The *Hillendale News* had increased in size by 8 pages to 40 pages and should give the members more articles and better value for their money. The Society was ready to publish the Parlophone E5000 listing.

In his report the Treasurer, Chris Hamilton, reported that the Society had made a surplus of £483.00. However due to the establishment of an endowment fund of £10,000 the Society's assets needed to be built up. He proposed increasing the subscription to £12 for the UK and Europe and £13 or US\$25 for the rest of the world.

This increase was approved by the meeting.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee were re-elected by the meeting. Ken Loughland was elected a Vice-President.

The full list of Officers and Committee is shown below and a summary of the accounts appears on the next page.

## THE CITY of LONDON PHONOGRAPH and GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

### Officers and Committee

**President:** G. L. Frow

**Vice-Presidents:** Tony Besford, Mike Field, Ken Loughland,  
Christopher Proudfoot and Dave Roberts.

**Chairman:** Peter Martland

**Vice-Chairman (i/c Regions):** Eddie Dunn

**Vice-Chairman (i/c London Meetings):** George Woolford

**Secretary:** Suzanne Lewis

**Treasurer:** Chris Hamilton

**Committee:** Frank Andrews, Geoff Edwards, Stephen Gadd,  
George Glastris, Don Moore, Richard Taylor and Len Watts

## Summary of C.L.P.G.S. Accounts for year 1/8/92 to 31/7/93

Bank accounts: No.1 = Bank of Scotland Main a/c      No.3 = Bank of Scotland Premier a/c  
 No.2 = Bank of Scotland Book a/c      No.8 = Girobank a/c

Account	8	3	2	1	Total
Start balance	260.00	6,078.00	1,853.00	2,423.00	10,614.00
<b>PURCHASES</b>					
H&D Printing		726.00-	3,832.00-	4,558.00-	
Book Printing		677.00-	16.00-	693.00-	
Book Purchases		1,329.00-		1,329.00-	
<b>COMPUTERS</b>					
Maintenance		147.00-	274.00-	421.00-	
Software & Discs		14.00-	698.00-	712.00-	
<b>MARKETING</b>					
Booklist printing		48.00-		48.00-	
<b>DIRECT EXPENSES &amp; OVERHEADS</b>					
Phonofair '93		359.00-	359.00-		
Travel		27.00-	292.00-	319.00-	
Stationery		141.00-	558.00-	699.00-	
Postage		426.00-	1,957.00-	2,383.00-	
Telephone		33.00-	153.00-	186.00-	
Room Rent			255.00-	255.00-	
Miscellaneous	6.00-	4.00-	49.00-	59.00-	
<b>INCOME</b>					
H&D Sales		9.00	48.00	57.00	
Bank interest	399.00	49.00	90.00	537.00	
Phonofair '93			443.00	443.00	
Miscellaneous		*3,404.00	22.00	3,425.00	
Subscriptions	119.00		32.00	7,410.00	7,561.00
Adverts	151.00			1,441.00	1,592.00
Book sales			2,267.00	175.00	2,442.00
<b>TRANSFERS</b>					
		12.00-	12.00	0.00	
End Balance	524.00	9,881.00	625.00	3,471.00	14,501.00
Income	27.00	3,802.00	2,357.00	9,640.00	16,070.00
Outgoings	6.00-		3,584.00-	8,593.00-	12,183.00-
Balances	264.00	3,802.00	1,227.00-	1,048.00	3,887.00

### Notes:

\*This sum is the sterling equivalent of US\$5,000.00 which we repatriated from our US Bank account in February 1993.

The Society had a net surplus of £483.00 in the year ended 31/7/93.

If you require the complete set of accounts please send s.a.e.(A5) and the Treasurer will post a copy to you.

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## Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

**December 16th**

*Members Night* - Bring your own favourites to share with others

**January 20th 1994**

*Follow the Dog* - Ruth Edge, Archivist with EMI Music Ltd. at Hayes, reveals some of the treasures she is responsible for

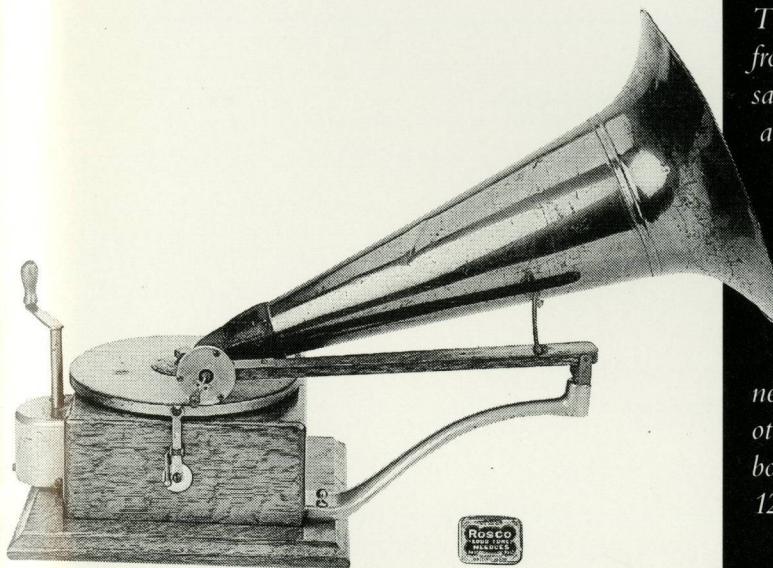
**February 18th**

Ruth Lambert - Title to be announced

**March 18th**

*It is not what it purports to be* - with Chris Hamilton  
(A look at some attempts at transferring 78 recordings to Audio Cassette, LP and CD)

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## Mechanical Music

Auction: London, 9 December 1993

Viewing: 8 December, 10.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.  
9 December, 9.00 a.m.-12 noon

Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]

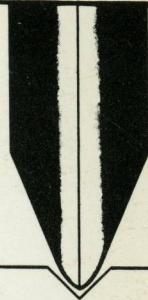
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